

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

**This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:**

**LISTING OF CLAIMS:**

1. **(currently amended):** An isolated lactic acid bacterial strain belonging to the genus *Lactococcus* and isolated from human stool, wherein the bacterial strain is *Lactococcus garvieae* 20-92 deposited under FERM BP-10036 and the bacterial strain has an ability to utilize at least one daidzein compound selected from the group consisting of daidzein glycosides, daidzein, and dihydrodaidzein to produce equol.

2.-3. **(canceled).**

4. **(currently amended):** A composition comprising the isolated *Lactococcus garvieae* 20-92 lactic acid bacterial strain belonging to the genus *Lactococcus* according to Claim 1 and at least one member selected from the group consisting of daidzein compounds and daidzein compound-containing ingredients.

5. **(original):** The composition according to Claim 4, wherein the daidzein compound-containing ingredient is soybean flour or soy milk.

6. **(original):** The composition according to Claim 4 which is in the form of a beverage or a milk product.

7. **(original):** The composition according to Claim 4 further comprising equol.

8. **(original):** The composition according to Claim 7 which is in the form of a fermentation product of soy milk.

9. **(withdrawn-currently amended):** A method of producing equol comprising the step of letting ~~an~~~~the~~ isolated lactic acid bacterial strain belonging to the genus *Lactococcus* and isolated from human stool, wherein the bacterial strain is *Lactococcus garvieae* 20-92 deposited under FERM BP 10036 and the bacterial strain has an ability to utilize a daidzein compound to produce equol, according to Claim 1 act on at least one member selected from the group consisting of daidzein compounds and daidzein compound-containing ingredients.

10. -11. **(canceled).**

12. **(withdrawn):** The method according to Claim 9, wherein the daidzein compound-containing ingredient is soybean flour or soy milk.

13. **(canceled).**

14. **(currently amended):** A composition comprising the isolated lactic acid bacterial strain belonging to *Lactococcus garvieae* 20-92 according to Claim 1 and an edible or pharmaceutically acceptable carrier.

**15. (canceled).**